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class distinctions, do not stand for or represent Nature's inequalities. Precisely the contrary in the long run. They are devises for holding up many that would else gravitate down and keeping down many who would else rise up; for providing that some should reap who have not sown, and many sow without reaping. But literature tallies the ways of Nature; for though itself the product of the exceptional, its aim is to draw all men up to its own level. The great writer is "hungry for equals day and night," for so only can he be fully understood. "The meal is equally set;" all are invited. Therefore is literature, whether consciously or not, the greatest of all forces on the side of Democracy.

Perhaps it is enough tribute to Walt Whitman that the year of his centenary finds the world discussing "democracy" as never before. It is a good year in which to call attention to Whitman as a patriot and democrat, and this his publishers have done in an effective way by bringing out the small book of selections containing the poet's "war poems" and poems of his hopes for America, his challenge to those who would be America's leaders and poets.

I swear nothing is good to me now that ignores individuals.
The American compact is altogether with individuals,
The only government is that which makes minute of individuals,
The whole theory of the universe is directed unerringly to one single individual—namely to You.

H. H.

LAMARTINE

The Life of Lamartine, by H. Remsen Whitehouse. Houghton Mifflin Co.

This is biography in a fascinating sense, and it is impossible to do it justice in the space of a short review. It is in two volumes, the first dealing with Lamartine the poet, the second almost entirely with the brilliant career, the disap-

pointments and the final days, of Lamartine the statesman. With tireless research into a veritable maze of material, with unsparing honesty, the author has coördinated force and weakness, has sifted out truths half hidden in falsehoods, and given us a living personality.

The author quotes Lamartine himself as saying that he held his poetic gift in slight esteem compared to his ambitions to be a statesman: "The credulous public believe that I have spent thirty years of my life publishing rhymes and contemplating the stars. . . . . I have not spent thirty months in so doing." Mr. Whitehouse's work proves that, whatever may be said, Lamartine's political and poetical ambitions went almost evenly hand in hand throughout his life. Certainly, to be a poet was to be handicapped as a politician. Lamartine once wrote to a friend:

> The reputation of poet is the worst of any in the eyes of the men who rule this matter-of-fact world.

And the author comments:

> All his life long Lamartine was to experience the truth which underlies this axiom. His political career was to be continually subjected to the jeers and sneers of those who saw in every humanitarian measure he advocated, even in his unflinching faith in the future of railways and other economic innovations, the poetic idealization their souls abhorred.

It would seem that a discussion of Lamartine's contemporaries might well have had its place in this biography. A few years after the appearance of his second *Méditations* Victor Hugo, Alfred de Vigny, Casimir Delavigne, Alfred de Musset, Madame de Girardin and many others were conspicuous. Even then Gautier may have been chiselling

out his *Emaux et Camees,* and Béranger was still thrilling France with his downright songs. Where such names as these do occur, they occur only incidentally, and there is no attempt at any discussion of the works they represent.

Lamartine has been called the French Byron. I see no reason why Byron should not as well have been called the English Lamartine. Though each denied a school, each really represented the romantic movement in his own country. But they were as different as are their two languages. True, Lamartine was in his early days influenced by the Englishman, whom he held in the highest admiration. But he was influenced even more by Rousseau and Goethe, even going so far as to speak of *Werther* as "the mental malady of my poetic youth." Those who derive from Mr. Whitehouse's work merely an echo of Byron should look deeper. They may be surprised to see how the French poet, writing in a time now so far from our own, was in touch with today, differing from his contemporaries in his use of form, in his free handling and varying of rhythms and metres, and in his setting aside of tradition whenever to do so seemed to serve his purpose. This led him to be looked upon askance by at least one publisher, whom he visited with the manuscript of the *Méditations* hidden under his coat—poems which later were to set the literary world aflame. The publisher, having looked it over, returned it to him, saying:

> I have read your verses, sir: they are not devoid of talent, but they show no study. They resemble in no way that which is accepted and expected in our poets. One knows not where you have found

the language, the ideas, the imagery of this poetry; it can be classed with no definite kind; it is a pity, for there is harmony in your verse. Give up this innovation, which would simply upset French tradition; go back to our masters—Delille, Parny, Michaud, Raynouard, Luce de Lancival, Fontanes; those are the poets the public loves; imitate somebody if you want to be accepted and read.

Lamartine was of today, too, in his insistence that improvements in material life—for instance, steam-boats and railroads—have their poetical side and may be used successfully for poetical ends. In this connection passages are quoted from *La Chute d'un Ange,* wherein the poet, discarding the wings of Icarus as hackneyed, invents an airplane, and the biographer goes on to say: "The illusion produced is sufficiently plausible to impress the reader as to his knowledge of mechanics."

Several intensely interesting chapters of the first volume are devoted to the friendship between the poet and Madame Charles. Those who would understand the poet and his writings must take into account this vital factor. As to the actual character of this relationship there have been many opinions, but Mr. Whitehouse records that it purified the poet completely of any former taste for merely vulgar affairs of the heart. Whatever conjecture may have to say, the world is indebted for many imperishable lyrics to this one great love of his life, this spiritual union with Madame Charles. His friendship with this rare woman began long before he met the Englishwoman who became his wife, and who stood beside him so staunchly through his triumphs and misfortunes. About this marriage there has been much misunder-

standing, his wife's wealth having given it a mercenary aspect. But we must remember that the French custom of arranging for a *dot* was adhered to even more rigorously in those days than now. They were congenial comrades from the first, and Miss Birch fell deeply in love with her brilliant suitor. That she married him with full knowledge of the dominating picture he still held in his heart is well known. When his wife's austerity discountenanced any audacity of thought or form, it was this picture that forced the poet to be himself and stand by aspirations then considered chimerical, but today justified—for, as Mr. Whitehouse points out: "He spoke for the future, and the present has vindicated him."

Le Lac and *Le Crucifix* share equal honors in being not only the two most exquisite of Lamartine's lyrics but the two perhaps most directly traceable to the spiritual significance of his romance with Madame Charles. *Le Lac* is reminiscent of his first meeting with the woman he loved, and *Le Crucifix,* as poignantly tender and beautiful an elegy as was ever written in any language, sprang from his anguish over her death. A little ivory crucifix was given to Lamartine which his beloved had held in her hands in her last agony, and which had received her last breath. The poet has said of this elegy: *"Je ne relis jamais ces vers: c'est assez de les avoir écrits."*

The author has shown discernment in his poetical quotations, which are none too many. Among them we are glad to see that outcry against injustice, the memorable address

to Count d'Orsay. Here are the closing lines:

> Au pilori du temps n'expose pas mon ombre!
> Je suis las des soleils, laisse mon urne à l'ombre:
> Le bonheur de la mort, c'est d'être enseveli.
>
> Je ne veux pas de vos bruits qu'un souffle dans la brise,
> Un nom inachevé dans un coeur qui se brise!
> J'ai vécu pour la foule, et je veux dormir seul.

Almost throughout the first volume we find the poet filled with a restless craving for political action, a craving satisfied in the second volume, where we follow his contact with the affairs of state—his parliamentary progress, his dealings with the provisional government, his foreign and domestic policy, etc., all of which brought him so conspicuously to the fore. Both volumes are enriched by good portraits.

Agnes Lee Freer

CORRESPONDENCE

WITH THE ARMY OF OCCUPATION

The following letter comes from the witty far-western author of the *Once-Over Books:*

> Here in Coblenz
> At the Y. M. C. A. library
> There is one copy
> Of POETRY—
> September, 1917.
> And it is on the shelf
> With Keats
> And Longfellow
> And Whittier
> And Matthew Arnold
> And Idylls of the King
> And the Golden Treasury